

The Power of Kings

Prepare to Read

Objectives

In this section you will

1. Learn about the forces that led to nation building in Europe.
2. Find out about nation building in England.
3. Discover how the Hundred Years' War affected England and France.

Taking Notes

As you read this section, think about what factors led to nation building in England and France. Copy the table below and record your findings in it.

Nation Building	
England	France
:	:
:	:



Target Reading Skill

Identify Sequence Noting the order of events can help you understand and remember them. Make a sequence chart of events that led to nation building in England. Write the first event in the first box. Then write each additional event in a box. Use arrows to show how one event led to the next.

Key Terms

- **nation** (NAY shun) *n.* a community of people that shares territory and a government

- **Magna Carta** (MAG nuh KAHHR tuh) *n.* the "Great Charter," in which the king's power over his nobles was limited, agreed to by King John of England in 1215
- **Model Parliament** (MAHD ul PAHR luh munt) *n.* a council of lords, clergy, and common people that advised the English king on government matters
- **Hundred Years' War** (HUN drud yeeerz wawr) *n.* a series of conflicts between England and France, 1337–1453



Pope Gregory VII forgiving King Henry IV

For three days, the king waited outside the castle where Pope Gregory VII was staying. Barefoot in the winter cold, the king begged forgiveness. Would the pope forgive King Henry IV?

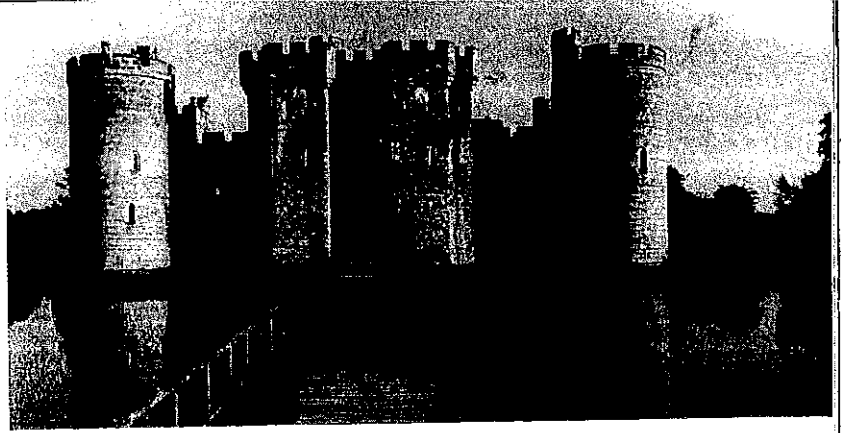
During the Middle Ages, kings and popes quarreled over who should select bishops. Because bishops were Church officials, popes claimed the right to choose them. Kings wanted this right because bishops often controlled large areas of their kingdoms. They also wanted to play a role in the Church.

In 1077, Henry IV of Germany ruled much of Europe. He had been choosing bishops even though Pope Gregory had ordered him not to. In response, the pope had excommunicated the king and declared that his people no longer had to obey him. However, after putting Henry off for three long, cold days, the pope gave in. He allowed Henry to rejoin the Church.

Pope Gregory had made a serious mistake. In 1081, King Henry invaded Italy, where the pope lived. By 1084, Henry had replaced Pope Gregory with a new pope, who crowned Henry emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. Gregory was sent into exile.

Nation Building

Henry's success in overthrowing the pope was a hint of things to come. As later kings gained power, they often dared to put their own wishes before those of the Church. They would soon increase their power in other ways as well.



The Power of Nobles When the 1200s began, Europe was still a feudal society. While kings reigned over kingdoms, the wealthiest lords also had great power. Many saw themselves as nearly the king's equal. In fact, it was not unusual for a noble to have more land, vassals, and knights than his king. But the nobles' power was based on the feudal system. If the feudal system began to decline, so would the nobles' power.

The Decline of Feudalism One reason for the decline of the feudal system was the growth of trade and towns. Kings began to support the new towns in exchange for money. They agreed to protect towns and made laws to help towns grow rich. Then, with the money paid by townspeople, kings hired armies and used them to attack troublesome nobles.

The Crusades also weakened the nobles. Many gave up land to raise money so they could join the Crusades. Other nobles were killed in the Crusades, and kings claimed their land.

The Birth of Nations Over time, kings became more and more powerful. Instead of a patchwork of fiefs ruled by many nobles, large areas of Europe became united under a single king. The kings became strong enough to challenge the Church.

Gradually, these larger kingdoms began to turn into nations. A **nation** is a community of people that shares territory and a government. A common language and culture also often unite the people of a nation. The process of combining smaller communities into a single nation with a national identity and a national government is called nation building.

In the late Middle Ages, the idea of nationhood was taking hold in Europe. A royal marriage united the two largest kingdoms in Spain. In Russia, rulers called tsars were expanding their territory and their power over other nobles. In France, a long line of kings slowly but surely increased royal power. Louis IX, who ruled from 1226 to 1270, was a deeply religious king. He strengthened both Christianity and the central government in his kingdom.

Castle Stronghold

This English castle is protected by walls and water. **Infer** What would be involved in defending this castle from attack?

✓ Reading Check What is nation building?



Identify Sequence

What events described in the paragraph at the right led to increased power of the king? Write these events in a sequence chart.

Changes in England

By the 1200s, England was already well on its way to becoming a unified nation. In 1066, William of Normandy, a duke from France, had conquered England in what came to be called the Norman Conquest. As king of England, William the Conqueror was a strong ruler who made sure to keep more power than his nobles. The kings who followed William—especially Henry I and Henry II—further increased the power of the king. Of course, the nobles began to resent this power. King John, a son of Henry II, would soon face their anger.

King John Angers the Nobles When John became king of England in 1199, he quickly moved to increase his wealth and power. He taxed people heavily. He jailed his enemies unjustly and without trial. Even the most powerful nobles were hurt by John's unfair actions.

John also angered Church leaders and clergymen. He seized Church property and tried to block the pope's choice for the chief bishop of England. When this bishop took office, he joined the nobles in opposing the king's actions.



King John at Runnymede

The Magna Carta marked the beginning of limitations on the power of the king. **Synthesize** Which groups of English society are shown with King John in this engraving? How did they benefit from the Magna Carta?

The Magna Carta John was now at the mercy of the nobles and clergy whom he had angered. With the backing of the bishops, English nobles demanded a meeting with the king. On June 15, 1215, about 2,000 English nobles gathered at Runnymede, a meadow along the Thames River. They presented John with a list of their demands. John was forced to place the royal seal on the document, and it became law. Called the Magna Carta (MAG nuh KAHR tuh), or the "Great Charter," it limited the king's power over the nobles. The king could no longer jail any freeman without just cause, and he could not raise taxes without consulting his Great Council

of lords and clergy.

This council later became the Model Parliament, which included common people as well as lords and clergy. Eventually, Parliament evolved into a powerful legislature. As it gained power, Parliament also helped unify England. At the same time, however, the Magna Carta also strengthened the power of the king. Because nobles now had a say in government, they were more likely to support what the king did.

✓ **Reading Check** How did the Magna Carta help unite England?

The Hundred Years' War

Despite the growth of nations, Western Europe was not at peace. Now, instead of nobles fighting each other, the emerging nations went to war. One long series of clashes between England and France was called the Hundred Years' War. It lasted from 1337 to 1453.

Causes of the War In the 1300s, the borders of England and France were not the ones we know today. As a result of marriage and inheritance, the English king had come to be the lord of many counties in present-day France.

You have read that William the Conqueror, who became king of England in 1066, was also Duke of Normandy in France. The 1152 marriage of King Henry II of England and the French noblewoman Eleanor of Aquitaine brought more French land under English control.

Then, in 1328, the French king died. King Edward III of England, whose mother had been a French princess, claimed to be king of France under feudal law. The French nobles did not agree. Determined to get his way, Edward III invaded France—and began the Hundred Years' War.

There were other causes of the war. Both England and France wanted to control the English Channel, the waterway that separates their countries. Each nation also wanted to control trade in the region and the wealth it brought.

Joan of Arc's Victory The Hundred Years' War dragged on, fought by one king after another. England won most of the battles, but the French continued to fight. However, the tide turned in 1429 when a peasant girl called Joan of Arc took charge of the French forces at the battle of Orléans (awr lay AHN). French troops at Orléans greeted her with hope and curiosity.

Under Joan's command, the French defeated the English at Orléans. She then led her forces to victory in other battles. In 1430, Joan was taken prisoner by allies of the English. England tried Joan for witchcraft. She was convicted and burned at the stake.

The French saw Joan of Arc as a martyr, and her death inspired them to many victories. By 1453, the English had been driven from most of France. With the English troops in retreat, France was on its way to becoming a strong and united nation.

Citizen Heroes

Joan of Arc

The young girl who would become one of France's greatest heroes was the daughter of a tenant farmer. Joan was very religious and believed that she saw heavenly visions. In 1429, when she was only 17, she journeyed to the court of Charles, the heir to the French throne. She convinced him that God had called her to lead the French forces at the battle of Orléans. Charles finally agreed. He gave Joan armor, attendants, horses, and a special banner to carry into battle. You can see that banner in this statue of Joan, which stands in Paris.





King Henry VIII

The Tudor monarchs of England, 1485–1603, were very powerful. Yet Henry VIII consulted with Parliament on important issues. **Analyze Images** How does this portrait show Henry's power and personality?

The Growing Power of Kings The Hundred Years' War affected the balance of power in England and France. On the battlefield, new weapons such as the longbow and cannon increased the importance of footsoldiers. Armored knights, on the other hand, became less valuable in battle. Feudal castles could not stand up to the firepower of the new cannons. Kings now needed large armies, not small bands of knights, to fight for them.

The Hundred Years' War also led to national feeling. People began to think of themselves as citizens of England or of France, not simply as loyal to their local lords. Kings who had led their nations in battle became more powerful as the influence of nobles declined. On the other hand, the English king had been forced to ask Parliament for more and more money to fund the war. This helped Parliament win "the power of the purse" and increased its power in relation to the king. These two developments helped unify England.

The Hundred Years' War helped set the modern boundaries of England and France. Forced to give up their dream of an empire in Europe, the English began to look to more distant lands for trade and conquest. Leaving feudalism behind, Europe was becoming a continent of nations. And some of these nations, as you will read in Chapter 15, would soon rule much of the world.

✓ **Reading Check** Explain two effects of the Hundred Years' War.



Section 4 Assessment

Key Terms

Review the key terms at the beginning of this section. Use each term in a sentence that explains its meaning.

(b) Identify Cause and Effect

Why did feudalism decline, and how did this affect the power of kings?

2. (a) **Identify** What are two limits on the king's power established by the Magna Carta?

(b) **Identify Effects** How did the Magna Carta help unify England as a nation?

3. (a) **Name** Who fought the Hundred Years' War?

(b) **Identify Effects** How did this war help unify two nations?

Writing Activity

Suppose that you are a French soldier preparing for the battle of Orléans. Describe your reaction to the news that a young peasant girl is your new commander.

Target Reading Skill

Reread page 419. Write the events of Joan of Arc's life in a sequence chart.

Comprehension and Critical Thinking

1. (a) **Recall** How much power did kings have under feudalism?

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